PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs Parker (Chairman), Allen, Mrs Avis, Birkett, Mrs Bragg, Dodd, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Hazelton, Mrs Roodhouse, Srivastava and Mrs Watson

29. MINUTES

The minutes of the –

(a) Licensing and Safety Committee meeting held on 29 January 2013;

(b) Licensing and Safety Sub Committee (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing) held on 23 January 2013; and

(c) Licensing Sub Committee (Alcohol and Regulated Entertainment) held on 9 August 2012 were signed and approved by the Chairman.

30. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Avis, G Francis and Lowe.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

32. UPDATE ON DEREGULATION

The Public Health and Licensing Team Leader gave the Committee a verbal report on deregulation on the limit of the number of hackney carriage proprietor licences. The main points were as follows:

Following a phased approach full deregulation came into force on 1st April 2013.

Fifty two application packs for new hackney carriage proprietor licences have been issued.

Two hackney carriage proprietor licences have been issued and the vehicles are now in use.

Three licence applications are currently being processed and a further six licence applications will be progressed once all the necessary documentation has been received.

The Committee agreed it should receive regular updates at its meetings over the coming year.
RESOLVED THAT-

(1) An item to update the Committee on the situation following deregulation be included on the agenda for each of its meetings over the coming year; and

(2) the verbal report of the Public Health and Licensing Team Leader be noted.

33. REVIEW OF TAXI LICENSING POLICY – CCTV IN LICENSED HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES.

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services (Part 1 - agenda item 5) concerning the use of CCTV in licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

Representatives of the licensed taxi trade (RHODA) requested that the Council give consideration to making the installation of suitable CCTV cameras compulsory for all licensed vehicles.

The Council’s current Licensing Policy reflects the Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance that the Policy supports the use of CCTV cameras in vehicles, although it is not currently compulsory.

The Committee agreed that a consultation exercise should be launched with the taxi trade, the public and other interested parties upon completion of the final draft CCTV specification. This decision was subject to a supplementary report being brought back to the Committee when the outcomes of the consultation exercise are known to allow the Committee to consider the matter further.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) The draft CCTV specification be finalised and a consultation exercise be carried out with the taxi trade, the public and other interested parties; and

(2) a report be brought back to the Committee once the outcomes of the consultation exercise are known.

34. REVIEW OF TAXI LICENSING POLICY – REQUIREMENT TO INSTALL FULL CALENDAR CONTROLLED FARE-METERS IN HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services (Part 1 - agenda item 6) concerning the installation of calendar controlled fare meters in hackney carriage vehicles.

The current Taxi Licensing Policy 2009 is currently under review. Following complaints of the overcharging of passengers and representations made from the trade through RHODA, officers are considering amending the policy to impose a requirement that all hackney carriages are fitted with fully controlled calendar fare meters which would prevent the tariff setting being manually adjusted to reflect a higher charge.

The Council has not received any complaints direct from members of the public.
It is a condition of the current Taxi Licensing Policy that all hackney carriage vehicles have installed, and use, a fare meter.

The Committee agreed the Taxi Licensing Policy should be amended to stipulate that hackney carriage fare meters are fully calendar controlled and tamper-proof to safeguard the public being overcharged.

RESOLVED THAT – it be recommended to Cabinet that the Taxi Licensing Policy be amended to impose a condition that all hackney carriage vehicles are installed with a calendar controlled and tamper-proof fare meter.

35. VOTE OF THANKS TO CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED THAT – the Committee places on record its appreciation of the work undertaken by Councillor Mrs Parker in her capacity as Chairman of the Committee for the 2012/13 municipal year.

CHAIRMAN